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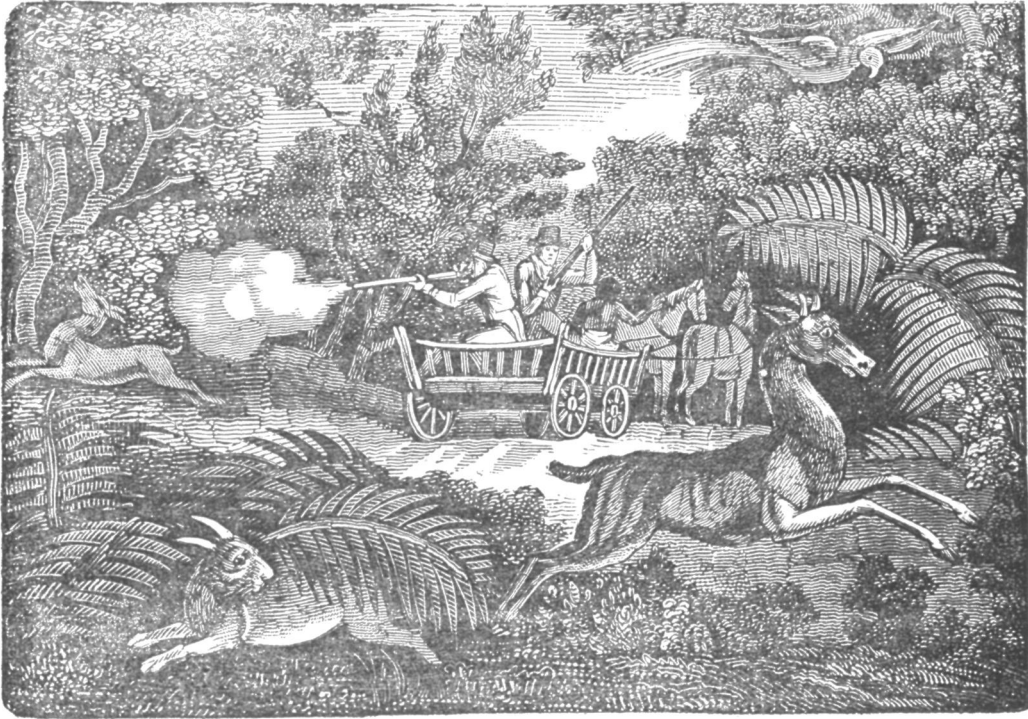
CONDUCTED BY P. DIXON HARDY, M.R.I.A.

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No. 144.

AFRICAN SKETCHES.



SHOOTING THE SPRINGBOK.



BULLOCK-WAGGON CROSSING A MOUNTAIN.

AFRICAN SKETCHES.

BY THOS. PRINGLE.

We should, perhaps, apologize to the publishers and our readers, for having allowed this very interesting volume to remain so long unnoticed. The truth is, we have frequently to regret that the contracted limit of our little periodical prevents our paying attention to works of merit forwarded to us immediately on their publication. Wishing to maintain for our Journal that character of *nationality* which it has hitherto supported, we have invariably given precedence to matters connected with, or having reference to, Ireland; and we trust this will be a sufficient excuse for any apparent neglect of other works, which might to some appear as claiming an equal share of our attention.

There can be no question, that few things can be better calculated to expand the mind, or to enlarge the ideas, than an acquaintance with the men and manners of other climes. It is for this young men of family and fortune are sent forth on their travels; and although many such frequently return little improved by what they may have seen or heard, still there are others, and those not a few, who do derive material benefit by observing what is passing around them, in the various districts of earth in which they may sojourn for a time. What travel does for some, reading and study perform for others. By the art of printing, individuals whose circumstances would not permit them to travel into other countries, are enabled to contemplate and study the habits, and manners, and customs of the various inhabitants of the earth, with nearly the same correctness and perspicuity as those of their more highly favoured fellow beings, whom fortune has enabled to wander whithersoever their fancy led them.

The work before us, treating of an interesting portion of our globe, of which little, comparatively speaking, is really yet known, will be perused with pleasure by readers of every class. Mr. Pringle, it would appear, was one of the first of those who availed themselves of the encouragement given by Government to emigrants disposed to settle in Africa. Early in 1820 he arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, having been strongly recommended to the notice of Government by the late Sir Walter Scott. He was evidently a man of considerable mind, and accustomed carefully to observe what was passing around him. His narrative has altogether such an air of *vraisemblance*, as at once to impress the reader with the conviction that he must really have seen and heard the various matters which he so well describes. There are one or two little things, indeed, which, having before observed given verbatim in other works, induced us to pause for a moment on this point. Such, for instance, is an account of a lion hunt in page 257 of the work, which our readers will find quoted in the 93d number of our Journal, from the "Naturalist's Library," where it is related as having occurred to Mr. Thompson—the favourite riding horse of each having been killed in a similar manner, with various *et ceteras* proving the account to be that of one and the same occurrence. But *n'importe*—the work is not only very readable, but highly entertaining. The sketches of men and manners are well touched off; while various "hair breadth 'scapes" from "perils by flood and field," keep up the reader's attention from the beginning to the end. Mr. Pringle does not pretend to any great scientific research in his description of natural history. He has, nevertheless, endeavoured to give as much useful information in this way as may serve the purpose of the general reader. Indeed we question very much, whether general readers will not derive more real information, relative to the actual habits and dispositions of the various animals described in the volume, from the desultory descriptions, brief hints, and outline sketches of Mr. Pringle, than they would from the works of those who go more fully and scientifically into such subjects.

As it would be impossible for us, within the limits of our brief space, to accompany the author through the entire of his residence in Africa, we shall for the present confine ourselves chiefly to those portions of his work which bear on the natural history of, and those customs and practices peculiar to, the country, which are described in

our engravings, and which, we may observe *en passant*, are copied from a work, published some few years since, on a similar subject, by another writer. We must, however, allow the author himself to describe his new settlement:—

"We struck our tents on the 13th of June, which is about the middle of winter in the southern hemisphere. The weather was serene and pleasant, though chill at night—somewhat like fine September weather in England. Our travelling train consisted of seven waggons; all, except one which was driven by a slave, being conducted by the owners or their sons, Dutch-African farmers. These vehicles were admirably adapted for the nature of the country, which is rugged and mountainous, and generally destitute of any other roads than the rude tracks originally struck across the wilderness by the first European adventurers; and which are repaired by throwing merely earth and faggots into the gulleys and beds of torrents, which, during heavy rains, sometimes render them impassable. Each waggon is provided with a raised canvas tilt to protect the traveller from sun and rain; and is drawn by a team of ten or twelve oxen, fastened with wooden yokes to a strong central trace (*trektouw*), formed of twisted thongs of bullock's or buffalo's hide. The driver sits in front to guide and stimulate the oxen, armed with a whip of enormous length; while a young Hottentot, running before, leads the team by a thong attached to the horns of the foremost pair of bullocks. * * *

"We passed over an extensive tract of mountainous country at the Zureberg, where the roads appeared to us most frightful and perilous. Certainly no wheel carriage used in England could have survived them; but our African charioteers jolted us along with great *sangfroid*, and without any material disaster. Sometimes we had two teams, of twelve oxen each, yoked to one waggon, to drag our loads of iron-ware up the steep hills; and then there was tremendous shouting, and barbarous flogging of the poor animals. But these are ordinary occurrences in Cape travelling. We saw very few inhabitants of any class, and few wild animals, except antelopes and quaggas in the distance. The features of the country changed alternately from dark jungle to rich park-like scenery, embellished with graceful clumps of evergreens; and from that again to the desolate sterility of savage mountains, or of parched and desert plains, scattered over with huge ant-hillocks and flocks of springboks. Here and there a solitary farm-house appeared near some permanent fountain or willow-margined river; and then again the wilderness, though clothed perhaps with verdant pasturage, extended for twenty miles or more without a drop of water. * * *

"It were tedious to relate the difficulties, perils, and adventures, which we encountered in our toilsome march, of *five days* up this African glen;—to tell of our pioneering labours with the hatchet, the pick-axe, the crow-bar, and the sledge-hammer—and the lashing of the poor oxen, to force them on (sometimes 20 or 30 in one team) through such a track as no English reader can form any adequate conception of. In the upper part of the valley we were occupied two entire days in thus *hewing* our way through a rugged defile, now called Eildon-Cleugh, scarcely three miles in extent. At length, after extraordinary exertions, and hair-breadth escapes—the breaking down of two waggons, and the partial damage of others—we got through the last *poort* of the glen, and found ourselves on the summit of an elevated ridge, commanding a view of the extremity of the valley. 'And now, mynheer,' said the Dutch-African field-cornet who commanded our escort, '*daar leg uwe veld*—there lies your country.'

"The 2d of July was our first Sunday on our own grounds. Feeling deeply the importance of maintaining the suitable observance of this day of sacred rest, it was unanimously resolved that we should strictly abstain from all secular employment not sanctioned by absolute necessity; and at the same time commence such a system of religious services as might be with propriety maintained in the absence of a clergyman or minister. The whole party were accordingly assembled after breakfast, under a venerable acacia tree, on the margin of the little stream which murmured around our camp. The river appeared shaded

here and there by the graceful willow of Babylon, which grows abundantly along the banks of many of the African streams, and which, with the other peculiar features of the scenery, vividly reminded us of the pathetic lament of the Hebrew exiles:—"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat; yea we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof."

"It was, indeed, an affecting sight to look round on our little band of Scottish emigrants, thus congregated for the first time to worship God in the wild glen allotted for their future home and the heritage of their offspring. There sat old —, with his silvery locks, the patriarch of the party, with his Bible on his knee,—a picture of the high-principled, grave Scottish husbandman; his respectable family seated round him. There was the widow —, with her meek, kind, and quiet look—(the look of one who had seen better days, but who in adversity had found pious resignation), with her three stalwart sons, and her young maiden daughter placed beside her on the grass. There, too, were others, delicate females—one of them very nearly related to myself—of whom I need not more particularly speak. There was —, the younger brother of a Scottish laird, rich in blood, but poor in fortune, who, with an estimable pride, had preferred a farm in South Africa, to dependence on aristocratic connexions at home. Looking round on these collected groups, on this day of solemn assemblage, such reflections as the following irresistibly crowded on my mind: 'Have I led forth from their native homes, to this remote corner of the globe, all these my friends and relatives for good or for evil?—to perish miserably in the wilderness, or to become the honoured founders of a prosperous settlement, destined to extend the benefits of civilization and the blessed light of the Gospel through this dark nook of benighted Africa? The issue of our enterprise is known only to Him who ordereth all things well: "Man proposes, but God disposes." But though the result of our scheme is in the womb of futurity, and although it seems probable that greater perils and privations await us than we had once calculated upon, there yet appears no reason to repent of the course we have taken, or to augur unfavourably of the ultimate issue. Thus far Providence has prospered and protected us. We left not our native land from wanton restlessness or mere love of change, or without very sufficient and reasonable motives. Let us, therefore, go on calmly and courageously, duly invoking the blessing of God on all our proceedings; and thus, be the result what it may, we shall feel ourselves in the path of active duty.' With these, and similar reflections, we encouraged ourselves, and proceeded to the religious services of the day. * *

"In our journey from Algoa Bay, we had seen in the distance a few herds of large game, chiefly of the antelope tribe; and we found our highland valley to be pretty well stocked with the animals mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. But we had as yet seen none of the beasts of prey that inhabit the country, with the exception of one or two jackals, although we had once heard the peculiar growl, or *garr*, of the Cape tiger (or leopard), and been serenaded nightly by the hungry howl of the hyæna, almost all the way from the coast. We were not allowed, however, to continue long without a closer acquaintance with our neighbours of the carnivorous class. The lion introduced himself, in a mode becoming his rank and character, a few nights after our arrival at Glen-Lynden.

"The serene weather with which we had been favoured during our journey was succeeded on the 3d of July by a cold and wet evening. The night was extremely dark, and the rain fell so heavily that, in spite of the abundant supply of dry firewood which we had so luckily provided, it was not without difficulty that we could keep one watch-fire burning. Having appointed our watch for the night (a service which all the male adults, masters as well as servants agreed to undertake in rotation), we had retired to rest, and, excepting our sentinels, were all buried in sleep, when about midnight we were suddenly roused by the roar of a lion close to our tents. It was so loud and tremendous that for a moment I actually thought a thunder-storm had burst upon us. But the peculiar expression of the sound—the voice of fury as well as of power—instantly undeceived me, and instinctively snatching my loaded gun

from the tent pole, I hurried out—fancying that the savage beast was about to break into our camp. Most of our men had sprung to their arms, and were hastening to the watch-fire, with a similar apprehension. But all around was utter darkness; and scarcely two of us were agreed as to the quarter whence the voice had issued. This uncertainty was occasioned partly, perhaps, by the peculiar mode this animal often has of placing his mouth near the ground when he roars, so that the voice rolls, as it were, like a breaker along the earth; partly, also, to the echo from a mountain-rock which rose abruptly on the opposite bank of the river; and, more than all, to the confusion of our senses in being thus hurriedly and fearfully aroused from our slumbers. Had any one retained self-possession sufficient to have quietly noted our looks on this occasion, I suspect he would have seen a laughable array of pale or startled visages. The reader who has only heard the roar of the lion at the Zoological Gardens, can have but a faint conception of the same animal's voice in his state of freedom and uncontrolled power. Novelty in our case, no doubt, gave it double effect, on our thus hearing it for the first time in the heart of the wilderness. However, we resolved to give the enemy a warm reception; and having fired several volleys in all directions round our encampment, we roused up the half-extinguished fire to a roaring blaze, and then flung the flaming brands among the surrounding trees and bushes. And this unwonted display probably daunted our grim visitor, for he gave us no further disturbance that night.

"A few days afterwards some of our people had a daylight interview with a lion—probably the same individual who had given us this boisterous greeting. They had gone a mile or two up the valley to cut reeds for thatching the temporary huts which we proposed to erect, and were busy with their sickles in the bed of the river, when, to their dismay, a huge lion rose up among the reeds, almost close beside them. He leaped upon the bank, and then turned round and gazed steadfastly at them. One or two men who had guns seized them hastily, and began to load with ball. The rest, unarmed and helpless, stood petrified; and, had the lion been so disposed, he might easily have made sad havoc among them. He was, however, very civil—or, to speak more correctly, he was probably as much surprised as they were. After quietly gazing for a minute or two at the intruders on his wild domain, he turned about and retired; first slowly, and then, after he was some distance off, at a good round trot. They prudently did not attempt to interfere with his retreat. * *

"Besides the lion, there are not fewer than five species of the genus *felis* found in the colony, which are known by the local names of *tiger*, *berg-tiger*, *luipaard*, *tigerbosch-kat* (serval?), *roode-kat* (caracal?), and *wilde-kat* (*felis capensis*). The first of these, which is the real leopard (*felis leopardus*) is considerably the largest and most formidable. The *berg-tiger* has not, so far as I know, been distinctly classed by naturalists. The animal called *luipaard* by the Dutch-African colonists, and generally considered to be the *felis jubata*, is far inferior to the real leopard, both in size and beauty.

"The South-African leopard differs from the panther of Northern Africa in the form of its spots, in the more slender structure of its body, and in the legs not being so long in proportion to its size. In watching for his prey the leopard crouches on the ground, with his fore-paws stretched out and his head between them, his eyes rather directed upwards. His appearance in a wild state is exceedingly beautiful, his motions in the highest degree easy and graceful, and his agility in bounding among the rocks and woods quite amazing. Of this activity no person can have any idea by seeing these animals in the cages in which they are usually exhibited in Europe, humbled and tamed as they are by confinement and the damp cold of our climate.

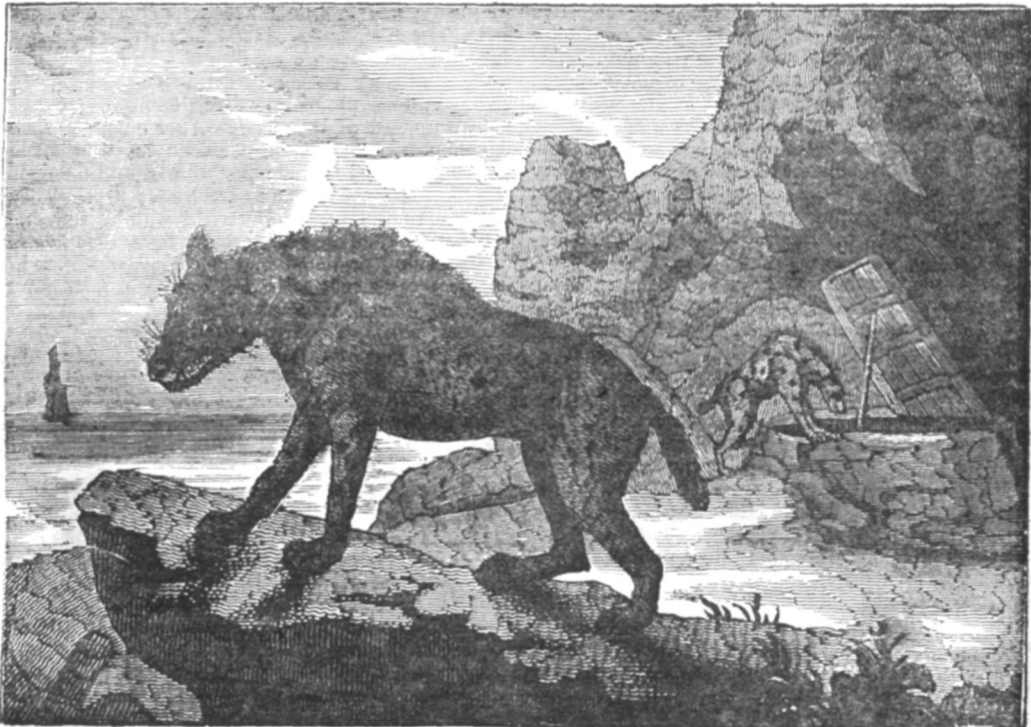
"The African leopard, though far inferior to the lion or Bengal tiger in strength and intrepidity, and though he usually shuns a conflict with man, is nevertheless an exceedingly active and furious animal, and when driven to desperation, becomes a truly formidable antagonist. The Cape colonists relate instances of frightful and sometimes fatal encounters between the hunted leopard and his pursuers. The following is a specimen of these adventures.

It occurred in 1822, in the interior of the colony, and is here given as it was related by an individual who knew the parties engaged in it.

"Two African farmers, returning from hunting the hartebeest, roused a leopard in a mountain ravine, and immediately gave chase to him. The leopard at first endeavoured to escape by clambering up a precipice; but being hotly pressed, and wounded by a musket-ball, he turned upon his pursuers with the frantic ferocity peculiar to this animal on such emergencies, and springing upon the man who had fired at him, he pulled him to the ground, biting him at the same time on the shoulder, and tearing one of his cheeks severely with his claws. The other hunter, seeing the danger of his comrade, sprang from his horse, and attempted to shoot the leopard through the head; but, whether owing to trepidation, or the fear of wounding his friend, or the quick motions of the animal, he unfortunately missed. The leopard, abandoning his prostrate enemy, darted with redoubled fury upon this second antagonist, and so fierce and sudden was his onset, that before the boor could stab him with his hunting knife, the savage beast struck him on the face with his claws, and actually tore the scalp over his eyes. In this frightful condition the hunter grappled with the leopard, and, struggling for life, they rolled together down a steep declivity. All this passed far more rapidly than it can be described in words. Before the man who had been first attacked could start to his feet and seize his gun, they were rolling one over the other down the bank. In a minute he had reloaded his gun, and rushed forward to save the life of his friend. But it was too late. The leopard had seized the unfortunate man by the throat, and mangled him so dreadfully that death was inevitable; and his comrade (himself severely wounded) had only the melancholy satisfaction of completing the destruction of the savage beast, already exhausted with the loss of blood

from several deep wounds by the desperate knife of the expiring huntsman.

"Of the ferocity of the Cape leopard, another example occurred in the case of the Moravian missionary Mr. Schmitt, whom I met at Enon. This worthy man had gone out with a party of Hottentots at another Moravian station to hunt some hyænas which had been very destructive to their flocks; and with one of the Hottentots, entered a thicket in pursuit of a tiger-wolf that they had wounded. Their hounds, however, instead of the hyæna, started a leopard, which instantly sprang on the Hottentot and bore him to the ground. Mr. Schmitt ran forward to the aid of the man, with his gun cocked; but before he could find an opportunity of firing, the animal left the Hottentot and flew with fury at himself. In the scuffle he dropped the gun, but luckily fell above the leopard with his knee on its stomach. The animal seized him by the left arm with its jaws, and kept striking him with its paws, and tearing the clothes in tatters from his breast. Schmitt, however, being a powerful man, succeeded, after receiving another severe bite or two, in seizing the leopard by the throat with his right hand, and held it down, in spite of its desperate struggles, for a few minutes; until, just as his strength was giving way, one of the Hottentots on the outside of the jungle, who heard his cries for help, came to his rescue, and shot the ferocious beast right through the heart, so that its death was quite instantaneous. Had any life been left, its dying struggles might still have proved fatal to Mr. Schmitt. As it was, he was so terribly lacerated, that for several weeks his life was in the greatest danger. The Hottentot who was first attacked, was less severely wounded; but his face was so much torn by the animal's talons, that his eyes were filled with blood, and he was unable to render any aid to the missionary who had so generously come to his rescue.



THE HYÆNA.—MODE OF CATCHING THEM IN TRAPS.

"I have cursorily noticed in my diary the depredations of the hyænas in our folds, and our success in catching them in traps. For this contrivance we were indebted to the Hottentots. The trap was built of large loose stones, with a hanging door of wood or stone, upheld by a stick, the lower end of which is baited with a dead dog, or the entrails of a sheep. By this simple contrivance we speedily en-

trapped several of the depredators that had so much harassed us; and after having killed them with spears, their carcasses were thrown out on the open plain. The smell of the *hyæna crocuta* is so rank and offensive that scarcely any animal will come near the carcass. When they are once fairly killed, even dogs leave them with disgust. Yet none of those we destroyed ever remained two nights unde-

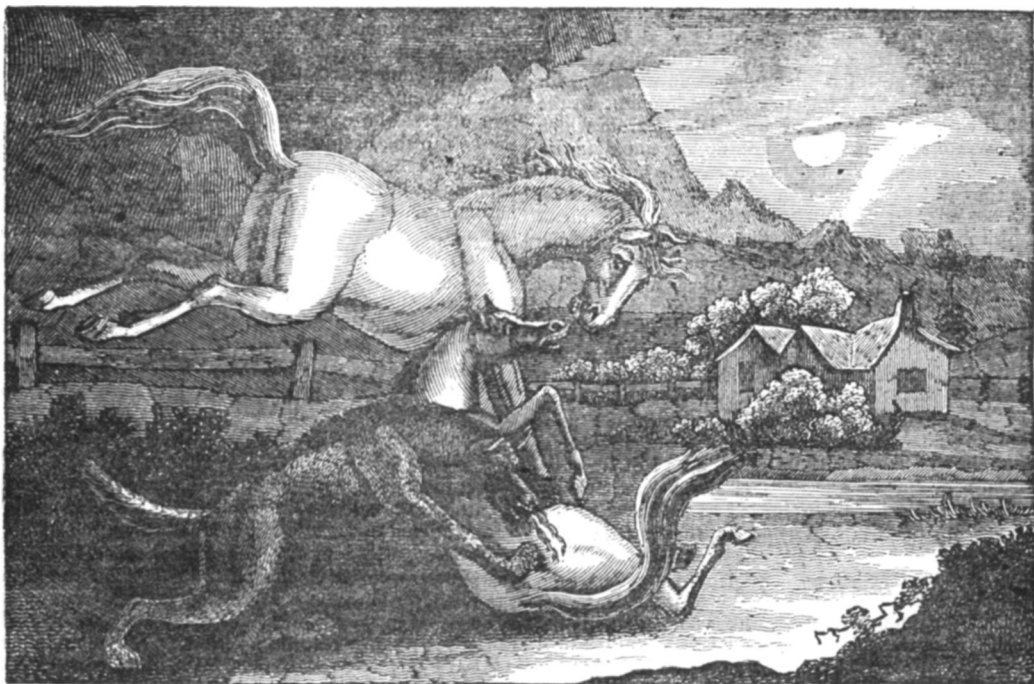
voured. Their own voracious kindred uniformly came in the night and devoured them, leaving scarcely a remnant of the skull and larger bones to show where the rest had found a sepulchre.

"Of all the beasts of prey that inhabit South-Africa, the common spotted hyæna (*hyæna crocuta*), called by the colonists the *tiger-wolf*, is the most voracious and destructive to the flocks. Were the courage of this animal equal to its strength, it would be exceedingly formidable, even to man himself—at least in a country where it exists in such numbers; but, happily, its cowardice is not less characteristic than its voracity. Though they are sometimes met with in packs or troops of twenty or more, I never heard of an instance of their attacking mankind either by day or night, within the colony. At the same time it ought to be remarked, that their awe of civilized man is probably greatly increased by his possession of the fire-lock; for among the Caffre tribes the same animal is found so much bolder, that he not unfrequently attempts to enter the huts of the natives, and even occasionally devours children and infirm people. But in the latter case, his audacity cannot fail to be greatly increased by the wretched superstitions which induce those people to expose the bodies of their dead to be entombed in the maw of this universal devourer, and which cause them to regard the hyæna himself as a sort of sacred animal.

"One of the chief functions of the hyæna in the economy of nature appears to be that of carrion-scavenger, an office which he divides with the vulture. The lordly lion, the imperial eagle, always kill their own game. The hyæna and vulture come after and gather up the offals.

This animal devours not only the remains of dead carcases, but also the hide and the bones, leaving nothing but the skull and a few of the larger joints, which baffle even his enormous strength of jaw.

"Three other species of hyæna are distinguished in the colonial nomenclature, as the *strand-wolf*, *berg-wolf*, and the *wilde-hond*. The strand-wolf is found exclusively on the coast, as its name denotes. It is larger than the tiger-wolf, and is said to be a dark grey colour. The berg-wolf, or mountain hyæna, is also large, and of a lighter hue. I have only seen the latter at a distance, and the strand-wolf not at all; but their habits I was told are very similar to those of the tiger-wolf. The *wilde-hond*, or wild-dog, (*hyæna venatica*), is an animal with which the colonists are but too well acquainted. It was first accurately described, and classed as a hyæna, by Burchell. It forms in fact the connecting link between the wolf and hyæna families, and in its habits and physical conformation partakes of the character of both. These animals always hunt in packs; they are swift of foot, and though not so powerful, are much fiercer than the other species of hyæna. When they break into a fold, or fall upon a flock of sheep in the field, they frequently kill and mangle ten times as many as they could possibly devour: they are consequently much dreaded by the farmer. Some of them have been occasionally tamed by the colonists. The *laughing-hyæna*, which I have repeatedly heard, but never seen, is reported by the colonists to be a distinct species, smaller than the three preceding; and is considered (I know not with what justice) to form a sort of link between the hyæna and jackal families.



MARE AND FOAL ATTACKED BY A WOLF.

"The following incident in buffalo-hunting, may serve as a specimen of this rough pastime: it was related to me by a Dutch-African farmer, who had been an eye-witness of the scene some fifteen years before. A party of Boors had gone out to hunt a herd of buffaloes, which were grazing on a piece of marshy ground, interspersed with groves of yellow-wood and mimosa trees, on the very spot where the village of Somerset is now built. As they could not conveniently get within shot of the game without crossing part of the *valei* or marsh, which did not afford a safe passage for horses, they agreed to leave their steeds in charge of their Hottentots, and to advance on foot; thinking that if any of the buffaloes should turn upon them, it would be easy to escape by retreating across the

quagmire, which, though passable for man, would not support the weight of a heavy quadruped. They advanced, accordingly, and, under covert of the bushes, approached the game with such advantage, that the first volley brought down three of the fattest of the herd, and so severely wounded the great bull leader that he dropped on his knees, bellowing furiously. Thinking him mortally wounded, the foremost of the huntsmen issued from the covert, and began reloading his musket as he advanced to give him a finishing shot. But no sooner did the infuriated animal see his foe in front of him, than he sprang up and rushed headlong upon him. The man, throwing down his heavy gun, fled towards the quagmire; but the beast was so close upon him that he despaired of escaping

in that direction, and turning suddenly round a clump of copsewood, began to climb an old mimosa tree which stood at the one side of it. The raging beast, however, was too quick for him. Bounding forward with a roar, which my informant described as being one of the most frightful sounds he ever heard, he caught the unfortunate man with his terrible horns, just as he had nearly escaped his reach, and tossed him into the air with such force that the body fell, dreadfully mangled, into a cleft of the tree. The buffalo ran round the tree once or twice, apparently looking for the man, until weakened with loss of blood he again sunk on his knees. The rest of the party, recovering from their confusion, then came up and despatched him, though too late to save their comrade, whose body was hanging in the tree quite dead."

AMERICAN PENITENTIARIES.

In some recent numbers of our Journal we enabled our readers to judge of the present state of society in the United States. We have heard much of the improved condition of their prisons and prison discipline—the following extract from the "Report of William Crawford, Esq. on the Penitentiaries of the United States," printed by order of the House of Commons, will serve as a specimen of the way in which brother Jonathan manages these affairs. That solitary confinement is productive, in many instances, of great benefit, has been established beyond the possibility of a doubt. It is evident, however, that great circumspection is required in the mode of administering this species of punishment.

PHILADELPHIAN PENITENTIARY.

"This penitentiary is situated about a mile from the city of Philadelphia. The site occupies about twelve acres. It is built of stone, and surrounded by a wall thirty feet in height. Every room is vaulted and fire-proof. At each angle of the boundary wall is a tower for the purpose of overlooking the establishment. In the centre is a circular building, or observatory, from which several corridors radiate: they are under complete inspection. The cells are ranged on each side of the corridors, in the wall of which is a small aperture and iron door to each cell: through this aperture the meals of the prisoner are handed to him without his seeing the officer, and he may at all times be thus inspected without his knowledge. Other openings are provided for the purposes of ventilation and warmth. Heated air is conducted by flues from stoves under the corridors. In the arched ceiling of each cell is a window for the admission of light. The cells are eleven feet nine inches long, seven feet six inches wide, and sixteen feet high to the top of the arched ceiling. The cells on the ground floor have double doors leading into a yard, eighteen feet by eight feet, in which the convict is allowed to take exercise for an hour daily. The walls of the yard are eleven feet high. Prisoners are not allowed to walk at the same time in adjoining yards; and when in the yards, are inspected by a watchman placed for that purpose in the tower of the observatory. * * * On the admission of a convict he is taken into an office at the entrance of the penitentiary, and subjected to the usual course of examination. His person is cleansed, and he is clothed in a uniform. He is then blindfolded and conducted to his cell. On his way thither he is for a short time detained in the observatory, where he is admonished by the warden as to the necessity of implicit obedience to the regulations. On arriving in his cell, the hood is removed, and he is left alone. There he may remain for years, perhaps for life, without seeing any human being but the inspectors, the warden and his officers, and perhaps occasionally one of the official visitors of the prison. For the first day or two, the convict is not allowed to have even a Bible, nor is any employment given to him for at least a week, a period during which he is the object of the warden's special observation. The prisoner soon petitions for an occupation. It is not, however, until solitude appears to have effectually subdued him, that employment of any kind is introduced into his cell. * * *

"So strict is this seclusion, that I found, on conversing with the prisoners, that they were not aware of the exis-

tence of the cholera, which had but a few months before prevailed in Philadelphia."

SYSTEM OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AT AUBURN AND ELSEWHERE.

"A trial of solitary confinement, day and night, without labour, was made at Auburn in the year 1822, for ten months, upon eighty of the most hardened convicts. They were each confined in a cell only seven feet long, three feet and a half wide, and seven feet high. They were on no account permitted to leave the cell, during that long period, on any occasion, not even for the purposes of nature. They had no means of obtaining any change of air, nor opportunities of taking exercise. The most disastrous consequences were naturally the result.

"Several persons became insane; health was impaired, and life endangered. The discipline of the prison at that period was one of unmixed severity. There was no moral nor religious instruction of any kind communicated within its walls, nor consolation administered by which the convict was enabled to bear up against the cruelty of this treatment. Nor was a trial of the same description, which took place in the State of Maine, conducted under more advantageous circumstances. The night-rooms or cells at this prison are literally pits entered from the top by a ladder, through an aperture about two feet square. The opening is secured by an iron grate, used as a trap-door; the only other orifice is one at the bottom, about an inch and a half in diameter, for the admission of warm air from underneath. The cells are eight feet nine inches wide, and nine feet eight inches high. Their gloom is indescribable. The diet, during confinement, was bread and water only. Thus immured, and without any occupation, it will excite no surprise to learn that a man who had been sentenced to pass seventy days in one of these miserable pits hung himself after four days' imprisonment. Another, condemned to sixty days, also committed suicide on the twenty-fourth day. It became necessary to remove four others, who were unable to endure this cruelty, from the cell to the hospital repeatedly, before the expiration of the sentence. It is said that similar experiments have been made in Virginia, and that various diseases, terminating in death, were the result. The cells in which the prisoners were confined have been since disused: they are, in fact, dungeons, being on the basement story, and so dark as to require a lamp in visiting them. In damp weather the water stands in drops on the walls. The cells were not warmed at any season of the year. A prisoner's feet were actually frozen during his confinement."

Such is the system pursued by the "wise men of the West," to work reformation in the minds of rational beings!

AN ADVENTURE.

"It is many years since a gentleman happened to take up a night's lodging in a room which overlooked a church-yard, situated in the midst of a small town. Whether he was a stranger, a visitor, or a resident there, I cannot, at this moment, call to mind; nor do I mention the name of the town, for obvious reasons. The gentleman was young, strong, and by no means visionary—so that if he looked out of his window before he retired to rest at midnight, it was most probably to speculate upon the weather. Once having looked, however, he could not withdraw his gaze—his eyes were rivetted upon the church—for he perceived, to his great surprise, that a light was burning within it, casting a dull gleam from the windows which surround the altar. He watched for a few moments in silence, and, it may be supposed, with as much awe as curiosity, until he was certain that there could be no deceit—for the light remained burning in the same place. He was resolved to ascertain what so singular an appearance could mean; but he would not go alone—perhaps he durst not—perhaps he wished for the company of other witnesses besides himself. One or two neighbours were called up, and the keys of the church-yard procured, after some delay. There burned the light still; and, though their eyes were anxiously fixed upon it as the gate creaked upon its rusty hinges to admit them, it neither faded nor moved. They approached the building—the windows were so high that